

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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THE BELOVED OF HATHOR
AND THE SHRINE OF THE
GOLDEN HAWK. ♀ BY
FLORENCE FARR AND
O. SHAKESPEAR. ♀ ♀

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THE BELOVED OF HATHOR, AND THE SHRINE OF THE GOLDEN HAWK.

BY FLORENCE FARR, AUTHOR OF *THE DANCING FAUN*, &c., AND O. SHAKESPEAR, AUTHOR OF *RUPERT ARMSTRONG*, *LOVE ON A MORTAL LEASE*, &c. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

♣ The action takes place in the first play on the roof of the Temple of Hathor, and in the second in a cave of Mount Bakhua, the home of the Metal-working Fire Magicians near Sinai. But the Authors wish the plays to be represented, not scenically but decoratively, with a simple white background or pale sienna hangings, so arranged that the figures of the actors, moving across the stage, may reproduce the effect of the ancient frescoes or illuminated papyri.

THE ARGUMENT OF THE BELOVED OF HATHOR.

♣ The scene is in the Temple of Hathor, at the time of the expulsion of the Hyksos, about 1500 B.C. Aahmes, the beloved of Hathor, has for many years been watched over by her High Priestess, in order that through him the great spiritual kingdom of Egypt might be restored. His final choice is between this great destiny and the mere splendour of material victory.

CHARACTERS IN THE BELOVED OF HATHOR.

✻ *Ranoutet*, the chief priestess of Hathor, and of royal blood, aged thirty-five. She wears a long black wig with a double fillet; a large square of cloth of gold is wound closely round her figure under the arms; she also wears a thin striped gauze overdress, an enamelled and beaded collar, sandals, and armlets. She puts on a vulture-crown during the war dance.

✻ *Nouferou*, the daughter of a man of noble rank and of a wandering woman, who deserted him after the birth of her child. Nouferou inherits the wild instincts of her mother. She is seventeen years old. Her dress is white and gold. The wig is short and surmounted by a cone and lily.

✻ *Aahmes*, a warrior chief of the Red Race, afterwards becomes king. He is in the prime of life. He wears an embroidered waistcloth over a thin cotton shirt, a cloth helmet, and carries a spear.

✻ *Ouny*, a child attendant of the Temple of Hathor. Dressed in white.

✻ The Chanters and Musicians do not appear.



THE ARGUMENT OF THE SHRINE OF THE GOLDEN HAWK.

✦ The scene is in a cave on Mount Bakhua, near Sinai, about 4000 B.C. Gebuel, the Magician of Fire and Metals, makes a talisman to Heru in the form of a Golden Hawk, in the hope of overwhelming the power of Zozer, King of Egypt, builder of the Step-pyramid at Sakkara. Zozer finds this out, and sends his daughter, who is skilled in the sombre mysteries of Isis, to win for Egypt the Golden Hawk, giver of exultation of heart.

CHARACTERS IN THE SHRINE OF THE GOLDEN HAWK.

✦ *Gebuel*, a magician who has earned a great reputation for power in the brotherhood. He wears a richly decorated robe of red and gold, sandals, and a conical headdress with hawks' eyes on either side of it. His age is forty-five.

✦ *The Priest of the Floods and Storms* wears a robe and symbolic headdress of blue and green.

✦ *The Priest of the Harvests and Famines* is also dressed symbolically.

✦ *Nectoris*, daughter of Zozer, King of Egypt, is dressed as a member of a religious order; her under-

garment and wig are of the ancient Egyptian pattern, but she is completely veiled in a thick gauze drapery. She is twenty-six years old.

✦ *The Ka* has the same kind of dress. She is the double or other self of Nectoris. The Ka is frequently represented on ancient frescoes as a smaller figure walking behind the king or queen. It represents the subtle body, and supports and strengthens the more material body.

THE BELOVED OF HATHOR

✦ *The play is to be acted against a plain white back-cloth with pale brown hangings on either side, striped to resemble the decoration of a papyrus roll.*

✦ *Ranoutet is lying on a couch with lions' heads. L., an altar with cauldron, crown, and incense spoon. A long fan in corner. Ranoutet holds some lotuses in Egyptian fashion.*

✦ *Ouny enters with a festival basket on her head containing lotuses and conical loaves.*

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Ouny. Here are the offerings to the setting sun. (*She places offerings on altar and comes forward.*) It is the last many brave men will see.

Ranoutet. Has news arrived? Has the great Aahmes carried out his plan? Has our mighty leader drawn the foes of Egypt into his net?

Ouny. Lady of wisdom, it is so. They have bidden me tell you that victory comes with the dawn. The Hyksos, hateful in our land, know nought of our armed men, who lie in wait for them, by order of great Aahmes, along the road which they will

follow to reach our city. With the dawn the soldiers of Egypt will rise from their hiding places and slay the Hyksos, and they shall be swept from our land. This is the message of Aahmes to you, O lady of wisdom.

(Ouny kneels and touches the earth with her head. Ranoutet rises and blesses her.)

Ranoutet. Dear messenger from the greatest in Egypt, may the gods protect you, and may the gods protect Aahmes, now warrior, priest in future years, the light of all our hearts.

Ouny. Great Aahmes is indeed a king of men. The leaders of the people love him above all others. He stands almost as near their hearts as you do, lady.

Ranoutet. Ah, yes, he is blessed from his birth. The foretelling of this victory has been long in our ears; when it comes to pass we of the temple will receive him with great honour. He is the beloved of Hathor, and her will has been his pleasure. If he can withstand temptation in the supreme hour of earthly triumph, she will receive him into the great mysteries.

Ouny. Can Aahmes still be tempted—Aahmes, the lover of Hathor?

Ranoutet. The hour is at hand which is to try his

strength of purpose. The goddess will give us the victory, that our sacred land may be purged of the people of Asia, who have worked in her evil and uncleanness; but the soul of Aahmes stands alone in the last trial, and can know no strength but its own. No name but the name of Aahmes can be invoked; no power but the power of Aahmes can prevail.

Ouny. Lady of wisdom, terror pierces me like a spear. Can it be that the goddess will take back her great gift even after his hands are raised to receive it? Can the goddess turn from her beloved? and can Aahmes be an outcast from the sanctuary?

Ranoutet. These things are hidden in the heart of Hathor—the heart of mercy and justice. To her mercy we commend him; to her justice we give him up without fear. O Hathor, great diviner of beauty, who rulest in those places where desire fails, and the substance of human life fades and passes into eternal truth; O Hathor, guard thy servant and do well to him.

Ouny. Will you not aid him, mighty priestess?

Ranoutet. I will do all that is permitted. Bring me the secret mirror and the Lybian wax, the holy herbs and oil. I will burn incense from all the corners

of the world, and I will have lustral water and the holy wands of power, the sacred Natron essence of the gods, who alone can purify all shameful things by their touch. With these I will bless great Aahmes and all his works once more. And I will send up an incantation in the hour of battle, before which all the dreadful gods of Asia shall be bound because their worshippers have made our land unclean with going to and fro.

Ouny goes, saluting and muttering the formula, I go in peace; may peace go with me!

(Ranoutet puts on a crown bound with Urcari snakes and faces the place of the sun. She pours out a libation.)

Ranoutet. O Ra Toum, thou enterest the kingdom of our Lady of the West beyond the holy mountain Mannu amid flaming orisons. Thou fallest into peace between the guardian serpents who are on either side of thee. Thou art one with the sun-disk in the West, and its powers have their place behind thee. Thy way divides the heavens, and the gods of the North and the South bow before thee. I, too, bow before thee, O creator of the gods; before thee who art king over the souls dwelling in the circle of thy path. The blessed

one receives thee into the deep shadows of her embrace as thou enterest into the mountain of the West.

(She burns incense. Ouny returns with a magic mirror, wax, cymbals, and serpent wands. Ranoutet takes beeswax and begins to model it into shape.)

Voice outside. Will the great priestess Ranoutet receive the warrior chief Aahmes?

(Ranoutet hastily takes off the ceremonial crown, and directs Ouny to cover the altar, and goes out. She re-enters, after Ouny has done what is necessary, followed by Aahmes carrying Nouferou. Ranoutet helps him lay her on the couch.)

Aahmes. Her heart is silent, she has seen men slain.

Ranoutet. She seems of noble birth; how is it that she went unattended?

Aahmes. The gods alone can tell. She is the Lady Nouferou. I found her helpless in the hands of ruffians far from her home. Her father's palace is an hour's journey hence. I cannot take her there to-night, and I come to ask you to shelter her.

Ranoutet. She is known to you?

Aahmes. I have fought under her father's leadership;

and she was still a child when I last feasted at his palace. How she came to this adventure I can in no way tell.

(Ranoutet restores Nouferou. Nouferou recovers and holds out her hands to Aahmes, not seeing Ranoutet.)

Nouferou (to Aahmes, who kneels by her side). You killed men for my sake. Oh, I am afraid! I see their hideous faces like beasts of prey! their claws clutch at my heart! Oh, save me from this horror!

(She throws herself into his arms.)

Ranoutet (with anxiety). Are the dead men still lying in the street?

Aahmes. I had no eyes to see what the crowd did with them.

Ranoutet (crosses to the door). I will send mourners to give notice of the dead. Until they have been purified no help can come to Lady Nouferou. *(Exit muttering)* I go in peace; may peace go with me!

Nouferou. Where am I? Who is that stern-faced priestess?

Aahmes (rising). She is the great Priestess Ranoutet, of the blood royal—the wisest of the devotees. She is so near the hearts of the gods that they

will do all things at her behest, and Egypt has never known famine, plague, or defeat since she first served them; and when the war is over and the new dynasty established she will be queen.

Nouferou (sadly). She will be queen and you will be king. She can choose no other consort.

Aahmes. No man may dare desire such a fate unless the gods decree it.

Nouferou (walks across). Ah, no! I was forgetting. Love is not love among the priests. I was forgetting the fierce laws of the gods, who stand between the lovers holding the sceptre of ritual, and at each cry of nature sternly denying!

Aahmes. And yet they say that the divine love which is given to the Children of Wisdom, that their hearts may lie poised between the two infinities of life and death, is greater than the earthly love, for it is the servant of life and the lord of death. (*He sits on the end of the couch.*) But tell me how you left your home and came unattended to the city.

Nouferou. I was forbidden to leave the palace. My father punishes—punishes like the gods—and stands always denying me all joy in life. I was a rebel and ran out alone, evading my old nurse. I

longed to see the soldiers and hear the clash of arms, and hear the war chant; for I am told, before a battle there is a wonderous dance no woman may see, when those about to die deliver up their souls to Mout, the Vulture-Mother and Avenger.

Aahmes. Hush, these are mysteries of which none may speak.

Nouferou. I burn for knowledge, for the freedom of a bird upon the wing. I am weary of the speech of the wise, who have not wisdom; who would tell me that Egyptian women must always be discreet and secret. I hear crying in me the blood of my mother, who was no Egyptian, but a wanderer. It spoke in her, and she listened to its wooing as to a lover; and she forsook my father, and, leaving me with him, she came back no more.

Aahmes. Do you forget what fate awaited the wanderer?

Nouferou. A short life my mother had. I, too, would live here for a little while, then go to join the shining spirits outside the walls of heaven. I do not desire old age and ugliness in Egypt, nor the great wisdom of the gods in heaven. To be always beautiful and young is enough.

(Aahmes rises, works round the back to R.)

Ranoutet (re-enters, muttering.) I come in peace;

may peace come with me. (*Comes forward.*)
The rites for the slain are being carried out.
Rest now, Lady Nouferou, and let the little Ouny fan you and call about you your own attendant spirits; for the spirits of the dead have passed to their own place.

Nouferou. I am well; I need no rest.

Ranoutet (firmly). Rest, Lady Nouferou.

(*Nouferou lies on the couch, and Ouny fans her with long feather fan.*)

Aahmes (to himself). It were easy to die young, and live among the golden nets of heaven—to die and drift like the Hammametu dancing in the rays of the sun—to have neither thought nor human care, nor the stress of human life.

Ranoutet. Do you forget Egypt, Aahmes? Would you have the destiny of those formless souls, whose little light flickers through the one short life they know, and then the rest is darkness? Is it in vain you have become part of your country, dedicated to her tradition; dedicated for ever to her destiny? Egypt has claimed her son, and Egypt is no foster-mother whose claim can be put lightly aside. There is no choice for her worshippers, for to fail in her service means death to the soul.

Aahmes. Ah! Ranoutet, I know the terror of the second death, and my heart is Egypt's! My heart longs for Egypt! As I have fought for Egypt in the past, so I will live for Egypt in the future! Is not such service easy when she speaks to me through you, the greatest priestess within the memory of the most ancient scribes? Give me your blessing, for we have to do great work to-night.

Ranoutet. Let us go into the sanctuary together, for Hathor has heard my invocation. She will receive you as her minister. After the battle fought for Egypt comes the enlightenment. Then comes the supreme vision. This flesh shall fall from you. You shall be no more the warrior of Egypt, but shall know yourself to be the Lord of Space and Being! Your soul shall tremble and rejoice at her own image looming out of the darkness of what you now call life! The light of the world shall be revealed to you amid the clash of the worlds which shall own you their master, O lord of that which has no end and no beginning!

A Priest chanting without.

Flame round my crown the fiery snakes
About me and around.

The chantress sings, the sistrum shakes,
In symphony of sound.
Fire from the gods a lightning makes,
Earth's thundrous depths resound.

Ranoutet. Accept the portent and receive the Yeoi-ret
crown.

(Aahmes kneels and is crowned by Ranoutet.)

To thee the earth, to thee the power,
The life and strength be given!
The scarab rests upon the flower!
The veil of the shrine is riven!
The stars are falling, for the hour
Sounds when the earth meets heaven.

Ranoutet. You hear the sacred hymn. The moment
is propitious. Come to the shrine of the goddess.
To-night the battle for your soul must be fought
and won!

*(Aahmes follows her out. In the meantime
Nouferou has been watching them intently. She
springs up and seizes the child, gazing intently
into its face as she speaks.)*

Nouferou. Ouny, Ouny, do you love me?

Ouny. Yes.

Nouferou. Listen now, Ouny; my little Ouny. Do
you love me very much?

(She takes it in her arms.)

Ouny. Yes.

Nouferou (*covers it with kisses*). Now tell me how much you love me.

Ouny. I think you a very pretty lady.

Nouferou (*laughs and clasps the child*). Quick! now tell me what is the ceremony the great Priestess Ranoutet performs to-night. Tell me, where will it take place?

Ouny. Here.

Nouferou. Tell me, will she make images of the enemies of Aahmes, and so contrive by her magical arts that Aahmes shall overcome the hateful Hyksos?

(*Ouny nods.*)

Nouferou. Will she make a mighty image of Aahmes and small images of the Hyksos, and will she place the foot of Aahmes on their heads, and will she place nooses round their necks, and give the cords into the hands of Aahmes, that he may hold their lives in the hollow of his hands?

(*Ouny nods again.*)

Nouferou. Fetch me some sacred wax, dear little Ouny, and I will help in the ceremony. I am well skilled in magic, and would gladly aid the mighty priestess in these simple arts.

Ouny (*rises and goes to the covered altar*), All things

await the Lady Ranoutet. There is much wax, and I will light the fire; it will help you to do the work more quickly.

(The child lights the cauldron from the lamp which Ranoutet brings in with her. Ranoutet returns wearily. It is dark. She sinks on couch in profound thought.)

Nouferou. Lady, I have some simple skill in magic, and if you work to-night in the sacred Libyan wax, I pray you let me help you. I long to try, and in some measure repay the noble warrior chief.

Ranoutet (carelessly). Hush! I am thinking. Anything you will. But I must rest in peace, to be ready for work at the hour of battle. The soldiers have performed the sacred dance: the final preparations are going on: they are stealing silently out of the town to reinforce the leading troops, which even now surround the Hyksos. Aahmes will lead the attack at dawn; and dawn will be the signal for the watchers of the night!

Nouferou. Sleep, lady, and I will mould the waxen images. One, half a cubit high for Aahmes; and two, one finger's breadth in height to represent the Hyksos leaders.

Ranoutet. That is the right proportion. I thank you for your service.

(Goes out with lamp, which Ouny gives her, in opposite direction to main entrance.)

Nouferou *(takes wax and gives a small portion of it to Ouny).* Go, child, and make two little images of the hideous Hyksos chiefs: copy them from the walls in the great court of the Temple and bind them with cords. Then sit at the foot of the stairs and play your psaltery softly, and I will call you when your mistress wakes.

Ouny. Thanks, noble lady! I go in peace; may peace go with me! *(Goes out.)*

(Nouferou takes cauldron of fire; and wax. She kneels by the altar and models the form of a man; as she does so she says:—)

O noble Aahmes, may Nou protect thy hair!

O noble Aahmes, may Ra protect thine eyes!

(Soft music begins.)

O noble Aahmes, may Anubis protect thy lips!

O noble Aahmes, may Isis protect thy neck!

O noble Aahmes, may Selket protect thy body!

O noble Aahmes, may Neith protect thine arms!

O noble Aahmes, may Nut protect thy legs!

O noble Aahmes, may Ptah protect thy feet!

I mould thee, Knoume moulds thee in beauty and strength, and nourishes thee in the fields of the blessed! Heart of Aahmes, thou art the dwelling

of the creator of Aahmes. What thou doest, he
will do; what thou lovest, he will love!

*(She places statue on altar, and slowly moves
round it, waving her arms. She stands before
the wax image and chants:)*

Aahmes, Aahmes, follow me
Where the poppy fields are white.
Aahmes, Aahmes, sleep the sleep
Deep with dreams of love's delight.

Aahmes, Aahmes, follow me
Where there shines a hidden star.
Aahmes, Aahmes, turn thy feet
Where the golden dreamings are.

Aahmes, Aahmes, follow me
To the magic fields of sleep.
Aahmes, Aahmes, pluck the flower
That it work a spell more deep.

(Dances round the altar, then says:)

Aahmes, Aahmes, I am love,
Calling loudly in thy heart.
Aahmes, Aahmes, I am love;
Never more shall I depart.

Ouny (running in). I must awake the noble Ranoutet.
Great Aahmes is below.

Nouferou. Hush! I will awaken her. Go you and
bid him enter.

*(Ouny goes out. Nouferou puts out the fires.
It gets very dark. Aahmes enters, and she meets
him.)*

Nouferou. The Priestess Ranoutet bid me watch that
none disturbed her body, while she, in sleep,
sought counsel of the great Ancestral One, the
ancient power that watches over Egypt.

Aahmes. No matter—I came drawn by some desire—
I would speak to you, I know not why.

Nouferou (puts out brazier). Come rest a little, you
cannot start till dawn. Your senses wander for
want of sleep. Sit here. *(Business. She pre-
sently walks round him, humming the air of the
incantation softly, and moving her arms as in the
dance.)*

Sleep, Aahmes, sleep and dream. *(He sleeps.)*

Dream, Aahmes, dream and love. *(He gazes at her.)*

(She kneels on the end of the couch.)

Love, Aahmes, love and live.

(He holds out his arms.)

Live, Aahmes, live and dream.

(She flings herself into his arms.)

Aahmes (*embracing her*). Nouferou!

(Men-at-arms chanting: the sound of marching troops.)

Gather the men-at-arms! the battle breaks,
The weary waiting days are over.
Let each man rush to battle as a lover.
The dawn with clarion note awakes.
Crowned with her radiance on our earth we stand,
Tried warriors of a sacred land,
Which trampling thunder shakes.

(Ranoutet enters; goes towards the altar; sees Aahmes and Nouferou on the couch.)

Ranoutet (*in a loud voice*). Aahmes! the dawn! the dawn!

Aahmes. What is the dawn to me? My life is here.

Ranoutet. Egypt is crying to her son!

Aahmes. Egypt is here.

(Ranoutet wrings her hands.)

Nouferou. I am the dawn, and I am Egypt! Beyond the circle of my arms lies the night. I am the dawn, and I am Egypt! When I speak with my beloved the voices of all the world are hushed, and he hears me only.

Ranoutet. O Hathor, look upon this image which I hold in the flames, that the spell may fall from him in whose semblance it is made, and he may be undefiled before thee.

The chant continues.)

Drums batter, cymbals clash, our hearts and feet
Responding to one splendid measure,
Wrapt with the glory of our mighty pleasure !
Standards on high our enemies to greet !
Answering the dawn's light with our eyes aglow,
Serene and proud and passionate we go,
Treading the pasture sweet.

Ranoutet. The banners are unfurled, standards are
raised on high.

Aahmes. Who is it that cries in the night ?

Nouferou. Listen to my voice, O my beloved !

Ranoutet. O Hathor, let the spells woven by this
woman dissolve before thee, thou flaming eye of
Heru. Let them fall from thy servant, that he
may stand upright and cast them away as the
soul casts away mortality.

(She reverses the dance. The chant continues :)

No man of us can be disheartened now ;
Death have we challenged by this trial ;
Before the hosts of death we dare denial.
Swift mother of our arms, do thou,
Who gavest us our land and the bright sun,
Give us the perfecting of work begun ;
Only to thee we bow.

Ranoutet. The troops are in array !

Aahmes. What am I dreaming?

Ranoutet. The glamour of the witch-girl is upon you;
your eyes are sealed by her kiss. She has
breathed the spirit of her dream into you.

Nouferou. I am the dawn, and I am Egypt. Sleep on,
beloved, for our dreams are a reality and the
world a shadow.

(The chant continues.)

O heart's blood of remembrance! Long ago
This land upheld our ancient fathers,
And for this land, your land, our land now gathers
One fellowship against the foe.
The spears flash! Be they as your mothers' eyes.
The trump sounds! Harken to your fathers' cries!
March you to battle so!*

Aahmes (*starting away while Nouferou clings to him*).
Your eyes are demon's eyes! Your arms are
chains about my neck! I am lost!

(He shakes her off.)

Ranoutet. The spirit of Temptation has awakened in
this girl. Through her Hathor has tried your
strength of purpose, and it has failed you. Go
now to the battle, and pray to the mercy of
Hathor that she may use your arm to strike the
Hyksos, so that you fail not in this also.

* N.B.—This poem is largely quoted from "The Coming of War," by
Lloael Johnson.

Aahmes (*cries*) I am lost! I am lost! (*As he goes
voices outside*) Aahmes! mighty Aahmes!

Ranoutet (*prays*) May Aahmes go forth like the panther
of the South! May Aahmes go forth under the
ægis of Hathor in the radiance of her light! May
Aahmes not forget Egypt, Egypt the mother of
the mighty! May Aahmes remember her in her
need, that she may requite him!

Nouferou. Woe, woe unto Egypt for the pain she has
wrought!

She has warred against love, and love shall
abandon her!

Wisdom is very powerful, but she cannot con-
quer love!

Wisdom is immortal, but love will destroy her
works!

Ranoutet. Silence! before the sacrilege of your speech
reaches to heaven and awakes the wrath of
Hathor, which, shaking the four pillars of the
world, would crush you into dust. Love must
serve and wisdom rule; but you would put love
above all! Your love would have put out the
light that shines from the glory of Egypt, and
serve the cause of Egypt's foes! You would have
shamed Aahmes to all time that love might rule
his soul one little hour!

Nouferou. I would see Aahmes dead—dead and dishonoured before I'd give him up to you, Ranoutet!

Ranoutet. Hush, hush! even now the battle begins! (Enter Ouny.) Give me the magic mirror. (She looks in it.) Aahmes is in his chariot leading the attack. Help me, Ouny.

(*Nouferou sits on the couch with her head bowed.*)

Ranoutet (to Ouny). Lay the Hyksos' chiefs under Aahmes' feet, and when the sistrum is shaken and the lute is plucked by the chanters and musicians in the temple court, the Lady Nouferou will help you wave the holy wands around him, so that the immortal serpents, guardians of our land, may weave the web of protection round him and round our troops.

(*Ouny arranges the images as in Egyptian triumphs described above by Nouferou. Ranoutet holds out serpent wands to Nouferou, who refuses with a gesture.*)

Ranoutet (pleadingly). To-night the goddess strives with the destroyer for Aahmes' soul! Think! even now the Threefold Terror may devour him!

Nouferou. If Aahmes dies now he is mine—mine on the golden borders of heaven; if he lives he is yours and Hathor's.

Ranoutet. If Aahmes dies in sin, faithless to Hathor,

his soul must die the second death! There will be no light life for him on the horizons with you for playfellow.

Nouferou. I will not believe it!

Ranoutet. That is the law of Hathor. Her servant must be faithful, or he dies body and soul, and his name is trodden out by the Sebau in the deepest cavern of Duat.

Nouferou. Woe! woe! Desolation, oh desolation! Has Hathor no mercy?

Ranoutet. Have you had mercy in your jealous rage? To the battle! to the battle! Do as I do, and lift up your heart in prayer that Egypt may conquer, and that Aahmes may conquer in his mortal combat! (*pause*). And listen to my voice, if Aahmes dies your life shall be the forfeit! (*Seizes her throat.*) The traitress has short trial in time of war!

Nouferou. Mercy! mercy!

Ranoutet (*contemptuously*). Mercy! see that your actions are fit for justice. (*The music in the temple court is heard.*) Quick, to the serpent dance! (*Holding out the serpent wands.*) Here, take the wands of power and weave the magic cord.

The priests chant outside. Yeioret!

(Nouferou and Ouny perform a dance.)

Ranoutet. Now call the spirits of the earth and sky!

The priests chant. Yakhu pout! Yakhu taw!

(Nouferou and Ouny dance.)

Ranoutet. Now clash the cymbals (*presents them ceremonially*), and I will call on the vultures of death—swift servants of the mother of our arms!

The priests chant. Maut! Maut!

(Nouferou and Ouny dance and clash cymbals.

Drums, sistrums, and cries of victory rising to a great clamour without.)

Nouferou (*seizes the image of Aahmes and shrieks*).

Then let Aahmes die!

(She shatters it on the ground and rushes out.

Ouny hastens to replace it.)

Ranoutet (*sternly*). Go, bring the meaning of this clamour. (*Ouny goes.*)

Ranoutet (*gathering together the pieces of the image*).

This deed brings judgment, for it shows that the hour is come when the Truth that is eternal and the Truth that is of time will divide the ways of Aahmes. As the semblance of Aahmes is broken, so shall the soul of Aahmes be broken, and the victory be to the flesh alone. O Lady Hathor! thou hast given this deed as a sign and an omen. Nouferou has shattered the semblance of Aahmes, and has broken up the waters of his soul! They

no longer reflect the divine image; but the troubled fantasies of love and human life. Verily Thy judgments are keen and sudden as the lightnings in heaven, and the thunders of Thy punishments make the earth shake in fear! The ways wherein Thou comest and goest are tremendous, and no foot but Thine may tread them!

Ouny (returning). Through the crowd I saw the father of Nouferou driving in his chariot with white horses, and he stopped before the gates of the temple and asked for her, and she came out from between the gates doing obeisance to him. She is white and tall, and the crowd rejoiced to see her; but her father had no smile for her, and took her into his chariot and made his way through the people, the horses plunging and scattering them; and I saw her no more.

Ranoutet. That is well; let him look to her.

(Shouts of Aahmes! outside.)

Ouny. The people shout because great Aahmes is in the midst of them. Their voice is like the hoarse note of the marsh-birds. He comes that you should bless the victory.

(Enter Aahmes. Kneels at Ranoutet's feet.)

Aahmes. O Priestess of Hathor, smite me across the mouth that I may be dumb, for I am not worthy

to speak in the temple! Take away my ears from me, that I may no longer hear the voice of Hathor; that terrible voice which carries judgment: for I have failed in the great trial.

Ranoutet. This plant of failure, Aahmes, which you have sown, bears a flower which to the outward seeming is of splendid colour and a sweet smell, and its name is Power. Put it upon your heart, and be strong to rule our people; but know that such a blossom is arid, and holds no promise of immortal fruit. Have power and the ruling of the kingdom, but have sorrow also, and eternal grief; because the doors of Hathor's sanctuary open to you no more.

SLOW CURTAIN.



THE SHRINE OF THE GOLDEN HAWK. ☞ ☞

☛ *The Priest of the Waters is seated. Enter the Priest of the Harvests.*

☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛

The Priest of Harvests. Our Master finishes his work to-night.

The Priest of Waters. At last! Each day his spirit becomes more charged with lonely suspicion. I doubt sometimes if this act of faith will bear good fruit for us.

The Priest of Harvests. Do not fear. Gebuel, being a great magician and our master, has promised us the victory. Even the Majesty of Egypt, whose name shakes our land, is to be overcome.

The Priest of Waters. Gebuel shall overcome Zozar, the enemy of our arts.

The Priest of Harvests. Hark! did you not hear the distant thunder? Which of us has dared name the king of Egypt for these many years?

The Priest of Waters. Pah! He, whom I have named, is the enemy of our arts. When I cursed

the land of Egypt with a great flood, he opened watercourses, and the evil became a good, and the desert was no longer waste.

The Priest of Harvests. The curse of famine, which I laid upon the land of Egypt, was unavailing. I cursed the land when he, whom you have named, was using the strength of his people to build the pyramid of six heights and four sides as a tower of magic; for it is raised above that chamber which lies empty, hidden deep in the earth, waiting for the divine secret which is to manifest in its depths and make full its vacancy.

The Priest of Waters. Curse the king over Egypt, for he has wrought so that our power falls from us.

The Priest of Harvests. Curse the king over Egypt, for he has annulled the ancient law to which all the works of men have been obedient! He has made bread from the substance of heaven; where-with he fed his people when it was my will that they should starve.

The Priest of Waters. To-night great Gebuel will bless the talisman of Heru, for the power of Heru is supreme: and if his godhead is on our side, not even the Egyptian himself can work against our will.

The Priest of Harvests. The fire of Heru will take the

form of the Golden Hawk; and his wings shall stretch out, and he shall hover over the secret place which Gebuel, blessed be he, has made of precious stones and rare metals. And our ancient glory shall be given to us once more.

The Priest of Waters. So long as the Golden Hawk is with us, victory is with us.

The Priest of Harvests. Only the taking from us of the Golden Hawk can take victory from us.

Gebuel (without). Ruler of the rivers and the floods, prepare for the coming of the Hawk of the North!

The Priest of Waters. Here I obey, great Gebuel.

Gebuel. Ruler of the Harvests and the Famines, prepare for the coming of the Hawk of the North!

The Priest of Harvests. Here I obey, great Gebuel.

(Gebuel enters, carrying the enamelled pectoral of the Golden Hawk.)

Gebuel. Let the ruler of the floods and of the storms stand on my right hand.

(The Priest of Waters brings libation vase to his right.)

Gebuel. Let the ruler of the harvest and the famines stand on my left hand.

The Priest of Harvests brings corn and a cone of bread to his left.)

Gebuel. Take the perfected talisman of the Golden Hawk between your hands while I invoke Heru, who rests upon the central pillar of the world! Heru, whose four servers uphold the shining adamantine heavens! Heru, who has sent forth his retinue to the uttermost limits of the earth, and remains solitary in the midst whilst they wind the magic cord on the circle of the wheel. Heru, the axletree of flame, the source of the fire of life!

(The priests each hold one side of the pectoral while Gebuel rests his hands on their shoulders and prays.)

Gebuel. O Ancient, before all time! Supreme Ruler over the work of That Mighty Countenance which speaks the Word of Life! Pour thy golden fire into this Golden Hawk now coming into being. I have made thee in the image of the mountain hawk which thou hast chosen to be thy symbol because of his fearless eye, which alone can affront the eye of heaven. Thou hast commanded, and I have made thy visible image in unchanging gold. May thy chosen ones rejoice in its presence, feeling the spirit of peace resting upon them. *(Removes his hands from the shoulders of the priests.)* Lift the bolt of the doors of the sanctuary.

(Priests go out. Gebuel holds the pectoral on high. Priests return.)

Priests. It is done, mighty one.

(Gebuel stands before the door. The priests kneel on either side of him.)

Gebuel. Hail in the holy place of thine Epiphany, solitary one! O thou who restest on the star in the centre of the Northern heavens! That star which alone is immovable. Thou art the celestial abode of our god, Star of the North! Divine Hawk, hovering in the blue night, dark as lapis lazuli! Immovable eye, in the midst of the wheel of the stars, send down a ray from thy splendid solitude upon this hawk—image of thee, thou solitary one, resting upon the empty air, immovable as thou art in the midst of heaven. Let the Priests of the Harvest and the Famine do homage before Heru! *(He prostrates himself.)* Let the Priest of the Floods and the Storms do homage before Heru! *(He prostrates himself.)* Hail, Hawk of Gold! I give thy symbol into thine own keeping. Hail to thee, resting over the Star of the North!

(Vells himself and enters the sanctuary. The priests rise and replace their symbols upon the altar.)

Priest of the Harvests. So long as Heru in the form of the Golden Hawk is hidden within the shrine, victory is hidden between our hands.

Priest of the Waters. The Golden Hawk is hidden within the shrine; and victory is hidden between our hands.

(Gebuel re-enters trembling. The priests support him.)

Gebuel. I am stricken by his eyes; I am stricken by the eyes of Heru.

(They lead him to the seat.)

Gebuel (staring in front of him). The Star of the North shines beyond the open gates; but some strong hand holds me back. I have a strange knowledge of one coming—whose coming will bring darkness. *(Tries to stand.)* I cannot stand. Close the doors quickly. Drop the bolt. *(This is done.)* Bring me the sweet-smelling fire that I may breathe it and find strength. *(They burn incense. He gradually recovers.)* Bring me the stones of wisdom, that I may understand this portent. *(They bring two stones.)* Let the secret be read and the sign given. Speak! let me know the riddle. *(He holds the stones to his ears. He says to the priests)* Leave me, for the answer is adverse. There is a secret evil even at the doors of

this holy place. Go cleanse yourselves with rites till I summon you again before me. (*The attendant priests go out.*) O Heru, dost thou demand that a victim should be sacrificed? How have I unwittingly sinned against thee? Thou sayest, "One must be made desolate." Someone is to be made desolate.

(*Nectoris knocks outside.*)

Gebuel. Who is there?

Nectoris. A wanderer.

Gebuel. There is food and shelter for all a little to the westward of this place.

Nectoris. I ask no food for the body. I come to feed the soul on wisdom. (*Gebuel opens the door.*)

Hail to you, guardian of the mysteries.

(*She salutes him in the Egyptian manner.*)

Gebuel. What wisdom do you seek?

Nectoris. The wisdom of the Golden Hawk.

Gebuel. Who told you of this place?

Nectoris. In my dreams I went into the forest where the bronze and gold serpents coil like flames amid the leaves, and they made me wise with great sayings, and the spirits of power passed into my spirit; for the forest was the forest of knowledge. But when I held the image of the Hawk exalted on the standard of the crossed pole before the

serpents, they paled and grew dim in the presence of a strength greater than theirs; and as I looked the wood became silent and empty, and the creatures of the wisdom, which is of time, faded away.

Gebuel. The serpent is wisdom from the beginning of time, but the Golden Hawk is poised in the immensities between that which has been and the revelation of the last secret.

Nectoris. Even so. I saw before me the Hawk brooding with spread wings in space beyond the worlds, in the midst of the network of the stars; and as its wings moved they fanned the golden denseness of the air, and sparks arose and came and went like luminous winged creatures.

Gebuel. They are the flames of life.

Nectoris. I saw three towers rising from the head of the bird like a great crown, and from them sprang the souls of the heroes.

Gebuel. Even so. This is one of the greater mysteries.

Nectoris. From the wings and the heart sprang the souls of the workers, who make beautiful all they touch.

Gebuel. The heart is the kindling will of the golden one.

Nectoris. From the feet of the bird came the workers of less skill and cunning, and these make the foundations of the works of beauty, and drift onwards, without the inspiration and the kindling fire.

Gebuel. Where did you learn to discern these mysteries, my daughter?

Nectoris. Since my childhood I have lived among strangers in a place of dreams. I have wandered from land to land searching for wisdom. I have but the sombre knowledge born of time, which is shattered before the final ecstasy. Now my footsteps have brought me to you, O great magician.

Gebuel (kindly). You are welcome.

Nectoris. I have been guided by some star that smiled on my nativity, which was darkened until this day in obedience to a wisdom higher than its own.

Gebuel. Why did you seek for me?

Nectoris. Your spirit springs from the triple crown. You alone can fill my soul, hungering for satisfaction in that wisdom which is beyond, hidden behind the veil. (*Gebuel sighs, feeling conscious of his own difficulties. He is genuine in his interest in Nectoris.*) Will you not let me follow you one step beyond the threshold of the golden sanctuary?

Gebuel. O child of the serpent wisdom, do you not know that no mortal may look upon the face of Heru and live? Only after the purifications of long silences, long fasts, and constant uplifting of the heart, may one born of the human race purge himself of the perishable substance of the life we know, and exchange it for the imperishable essence of the shining ones. Only after such rites have been performed may you hope to pass through the closed doors of the sanctuary.

Nectoris (with passion). Let me but look upon the door.

Gebuel. The door is there—your first duty is to keep vigil. But beware of the brightness hidden in the heart of the shrine. To look upon it is to be blind; to be enfolded by its heat is to pass through fires too potent for any human soul.

Nectoris. I will keep vigil.

Gebuel. You are rash! being young, and do not know that there is a wisdom before which the sun pales and the stars are put out.

Nectoris. Let me begin the vigil that it may be the sooner ended!

Gebuel. To watch from this day until your span of earthly life is ended would not be long enough. Be warned, let the shut door remain closed.

Nectoris. Father of Wisdom, put me to the test. I will endure all hardships.

Gebuel. No hardship is before those who worship Heru. I ask nothing but obedience to my warning. Keep vigil before the door of the sanctuary; the bolts are easy, the secret of secrets is within, but remember the light of flame brings desolation. You are warned.

Nectoris (*as if in a dream*). "The light shines forth and leaves you desolate."

Gebuel (*suddenly becoming suspicious*). The words that were spoken to me out of the stones! Desolate—one to be made desolate! Where have you heard those words?

Nectoris. They passed through the air as you were speaking.

Gebuel. The warning is given for the second time! To you the unseen spirits are not dumb. How have you this power?

Nectoris. Great Master, I am but a little child in the presence of your wisdom. I come not to show that I have knowledge, but to gain it by your aid. I have heard the voices of the unseen ones since I was a child, and taken no thought of it.

(*Gebuel claps his hands. The priests enter.*)

Gebuel. Set guards about the door, and see that none go in or out this day.

(*The priests salute and go out.*)

Gebuel (*sardonically*). The secret of all knowledge is within the shrine. The vigil must be long. You will be alone for many hours, and none will enter in to disturb you. Have courage!

Nectoris. Your look upon me is heavy and cold as stone. O Master, do you deny me the wisdom of the Golden Hawk, for which I ask in all humility?

Gebuel. Again I say the secret is within the shrine. Keep vigil!

Nectoris. I am afraid! Your face has become like a mask of stone. The human face is hidden behind it. I am afraid!

Gebuel. The secret is within the shrine. Keep vigil till I come again. (*He goes.*)

Nectoris (*shrieks*). This terror kills me! (*She throws off her veil.*) Spirit of Zozer my father, I call on you for help! My flesh fails—I cannot move, Father in thy magic shrine, save me! Father in thy magic shrine, reign over me! Father in thy magic shrine, pour thy will into me, for I am powerless alone! Spirit of Zozer my father, help thy child!

(*She sinks on the floor. The Ka glides in and covers herself with the veil.*)

The Ka. Look upon me. I am with you. You have begun well, and are worthy of your inheritance.

Do not fail now. Have you forgotten your father's words ?

Nectoris. Sister of my soul ! they are in my heart for ever.

The Ka. Speak them.

Nectoris. He said, a Golden Hawk has been fashioned by the magicians of Mount Bakhua, and will be hidden by them in a sanctuary. Its capture would bring joy and great knowledge to Egypt. If you, a woman wise with the serpent wisdom, should gain that sanctuary and bring back the amulet, I will give the throne of Egypt to you and to your daughters for ever ; that honour may be paid to the woman of splendid courage. And no man shall reign over Egypt, in his own right, from that day.

The Ka. So he swore to you. You know what is within this shrine ; enter and take the Golden One for your people.

Nectoris. The face of the Guardian was terrible when he left me, as though he knew I were tempting the gods to my ruin. Can a mortal look on that hidden brightness and live ?

The Ka. You are not mortal. The pure essence of the gods, whereof your spirit is made, is but veiled with a gossamer of substance. Have not we, O

my sister soul, passed together through the flames which cleanse us from mortality? Have I not stripped you naked of that mortal flesh, which gives terror to the whirl of time and to the immensity of the abyss, when your mortal heart died in you, and your spirit dared greatly in those spaces beyond knowledge?

Nectoris. I will cast out trembling from my heart in this hour, and take the strong soul which no passion can shake; that I may enter into the shrine and win the Golden One for my people and the throne of Egypt for myself and my daughters.

The Ka. Egypt is great and skilled in august mysteries; and to reign over her and to follow her wisdom is to become equal with the gods; and when the last mysteries are won, even greater than they. Kneel with me, that we may together call the powers forth from their hidingplace, for the great Heru is not without us. We shall find him in ourselves.

(They kneel.) O thou whose wings cover the earth! cover the body of thy servant, that she may find the living flame within herself, and enter without fear before thee! O Hawk of the North, whose secret places are paved with fire which consumeth time and the substance thereof! bless the feet of

thy servant that she may pass unscathed to thy throne. O Heru, whose eye pierces the earth and the heavens, bless the eyes of thy servant that she may look upon thee and live. O Heru, on whose brow lies the weight of wisdom, bless the brow of thy servant, that she may bind upon it the triple crown of glory; and that she may win the wisdom of the Golden Hawk, and give it to her people.

(Nectoris rises and enters the shrine. The Ka looks after her.)

The Ka. The bolts are lifted and the doors turn in their sockets. She kneels, and fear wraps her round as a grey garment. O sister, let the light of Heru pierce you. She rises, and her fear is rent upon her as lightning rends the flesh. She is clothed in the cold fires of the Northern Star. She flings her arms to the air, and a wild joy is in her heart. The spirit and the flesh wrestle for victory, for she has yet some part in what is mortal. She cannot breathe—she speaks at last!

Nectoris (within). Let my feet move now in triumph to the music of the worlds beyond space, where thy mighty heart beats out the rhythm, making the worlds to fall and rise in their order, and the stars to follow in their courses! I am

drunk with conquest, and I shake the sistrum and dance with my naked feet unscathed upon thy golden floor! And the measures I dance are to me as the movement of a great army which has scaled the awful walls of thy majesty, and taken the fortress of thy wisdom!

The Ka. She moves in the dance as one who sees a splendour which is beyond the eye of man. Her limbs shine in the nimbus of the Hawk of Glory. She is more golden than the talisman upon her breast. She is here! (*Dances.*) She is around me! (*Dances.*) Her substance is not mortal! (*Dances.*) She is around me; the flames sweep over me, and the shadows of time pass away! (*Dances.*) Nectoris, my sister soul, the victory is won! (*Dances, and passes into the shrine.*)

Gebuel (enters and looks round). Yet another vigil broken! Heru has chosen his victim. He has called her into the shrine that he may slay her. One more mortal light put out by the light of the gods!

(Nectoris appears at the door of the shrine, radiant, looking younger and full of exultation. The amulet is on her breast.)

Gebuel. You are not slain before the face of Heru?

Nectoris. I am not slain!

Gebuel. How have you, being unveiled, looked upon his face?

Nectoris. I look unharmed upon the face of the god because his eyes are my eyes, and his power is my power, his spirit is my spirit. I am an Egyptian and mistress of the mysteries. I have become one with Heru, for I have eaten of his substance and I have drunk of his spirit, and I am henceforth ruler of the holy places. Whoso is made one with the gods makes their holy places desolate, and himself becomes their sanctuary; and his being is greater than theirs, being made of their own substance. For he has devoured their mystical rites and symbols, he has swallowed their shining forms, he has eaten the power and wisdom of every god, and the period of his life is eternity!

Gebuel. Let the presence of Heru seal your blasphemous lips!

Nectoris. Yes, you are in the presence of the Flame of Life. I, a woman of Egypt, have been chosen to pierce this mystery, and have entered into the shrine of the Golden One, and his fires have not burned, neither has his eye wounded me. The wise sister of my spirit enfolded me in safety, and gathered about me the shining garment of Heru.

Enter in, O magician, and look upon the place of flame. Enter into the empty shrine which has yielded its treasure to me. The Golden Hawk is on my breast as a sign. Heru has put his finger upon me and marked me for his own, and I am Egypt. I go to my own country that I may sit on the throne and give wisdom and exultation of heart to my people.

Gebuel. Desolation has fallen upon me! I am myself the victim of Heru. Verily it is true, "In his shining I have seen darkness, and the light of mine eyes has been put out." You are stronger than I; the amulet of the god lies upon your heart and does not strike you dead. You have won it; let your triumph be enough. Give me back my Golden Hawk, which I have made of the imperishable substance of the earth!

Nectoris. I carry the Golden Hawk to my father, wise and beautiful Zozer, builder of the pyramid of six heights and four sides, that he may place it in the secret sanctuary under the bolt of granite that will answer to the touch of his finger, but takes the strength of a hundred men to lift.

Gebuel. Daughter of Zozer, wise and beautiful, let the spirit of your victory remain with you, and give me back my image of the god; that I, who am

less than you, may see and worship with mine eyes, which may only look upon the god in his semblance.

Nectoris. You can follow Heru into Egypt, O magician, and so long the secret lord of this place! Your day is darkened. Come with your god into Egypt, and serve him in that new land which is thirsty for him; you shall see the dawn again when his light rises in a great country, and you shall teach his wisdom.

Gebuel. And if I follow you, will it be to forsake this shrine which I have made of precious stones and metals, each stone with its own secret?—in chrysoprase the secret of vision, in amethyst the inner fire of the soul, in chrysolyte the secret of seership, in lapis lazuli the hidden wisdom, and in cornelian the secret of ritual.

Nectoris. Bring the dwellingplace of Heru with you, for it is sacred; and you are the master of these things. And my people shall hold you in high honour, and your works shall live after you, wrought in amethyst and in cornelian, in chrysoprase and in chrysolyte, and in lapis lazuli. Bring the shrine of Heru, for his spirit goes before. And put chains on the necks of your priests, and bend their wills to the will of the great one who

rules in Egypt, that there may be no more floods or famines in the land.

Gebuel. O wearer of the Golden Hawk! Daughter of Zozer of whom prophecy has spoken! Daughter of Zozer, builder of the pyramid of which the six heights are the steps of wisdom, I follow you, and my priests shall follow you; we are the victims upon his altar. Is not the dwelling of Heru my dwelling? and shall not the shrine of Heru be the eternal resting-place of my spirit? I follow you, O great among women, for you are the will of Heru made manifest.

Chorus of Priests. Immovable in heaven, we adore thee. Heru, Hawk of Gold, we adore thee.

CURTAIN.

NOTE.—It is interesting to point out that the final ecstasy of Nectoris is quoted thought for thought from the earliest Egyptian texts which have yet been discovered. Just as the Modern World has come to think of Heaven as a state rather than as a place, so we learn from these texts that the wise men of the Ancient World had gone a step farther, and knew the gods to be states and not persons.





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